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J.A. ANDREWS

a brief biography

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J.A. ANDREWS

a brief biography

—by—
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J.A. ANDREWS : A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY
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finished sentences under a red flag, his hair sticking through a split hat, his boots tied up with string, his beard a month old...

'The Australian Star' for 21 February 1895 described Andrews at his trial for sedition as "a middle-aged man, (with) long hair, pallid face and restless eyes..." He was, at the time, just on thirty.

It is necessary to keep in mind his physical appearance, for it was this which made it easier for the protectors of the status quo to separate him from the labour movement and thus use him as scapegoat and warning. His talking in depth as well as at length didn't help, nor did his tendency to isolation and aloofness. The Coleman quote is evidence of the continuing power of the strategy of reducing a threat to clownishness to induce laughter and isolation. There is both fear and comic relief in the stigmatisation of anarchism.

Nor did it help to have public conflicts between various agitators, nor obvious confusion of effort among excitable, naive conspirators who managed with the media to turn serious questions of strategy into a tragi-comedy of mock heroics and blind gesturing. Time unfortunately, was against a reasoned consideration of options or a slow maturing of understanding of anarchism's message.

But there is sufficient evidence to show that Andrews was singled out by the authorities for removal from the public scene, first to quiet, if not still, his message, second to scare the labour movement generally into moderation, i.e. acquiescence, and thirdly to calm the fears of potential investors. Andrews is not the only radical so treated, and by 1894, when the jailings in Sydney reached double figures, I would maintain that the likelihood of successful revolution had passed anyway, had long passed. Nevertheless, the evidence is suggestive that not only did the establishment set the laws to suit itself, then twist or manipulate them when it suited, this one would expect, but also that it worked secretly, often illegally, in a deliberate and organised way to counter what it saw as a threat.

If Andrews was singled out, and the evidence is suggestive, it must have been because of his claims about a network of communist-anarchists in Australia, his links to overseas agitators where bloody violence had occurred, and because of the atmosphere of trivialisation, in which distortion of the serious and revelant message of anarchism was possible. The situation has worsened in the years since Andrews' death.

Bob James,
October, 1985.

pline based on his own experience. He was asked by the Criminological Society to repeat accounts of his own experiences in Biloela jail, after a long series on 'Criminals and Their Treatment' in 'Tocsin', 1901-1902.

This reporter's skill at analysing social questions from personal knowledge Andrews used in at least two other long series of articles in 'Tocsin', one on 'Australian Slums' and one 'With Swag and Billy'. He apparently retained the respect of most labour-oriented people who met him, radicals and others. George Black and W.G. Spence are listed as referees for job applications he made in 1899, while to O'Dowd he was always "truthful, gentle, loving and honest and without faithful to the masses".

In 'Tocsin' after his death 'Bohemian' offered a poem,³⁰ the Trades Hall Council of Coburg and Emerald Hill Political Labor Council branches expressed sympathy, and W.J. Sharples, an anarchist who knew him in Melbourne compared him to Tolstol, Kropotkin, Thoreau and Verlaine, among others. Bertram Stevens said Andrews 'was as gentle as a grub and looked like Christ', in his contribution to 'Stories of Henry Lawson by his Mates', Ernle Lane remembered him as 'an outstanding figure in the Australian revolutionary movement... a man of exceptional ability...'.³¹ Jack Lang remembered him well.

L.G. Churchward in 'Australian Labor Movement 1850-1907' refers to special relations between socialist 'debating groups' and labour journalism: 'this development was of special importance for it brought the socialist intellectuals, especially O'Dowd and J.A. Andrews, into much closer contact with the organised working class movement and it enabled their ideas to influence thousands of workers, instead of a small handful of metropolitan debaters...'.³²

To determine the extent of Andrews' influence we must put against his talents as writer and theoretician the effect of his personal appearance.

'Eleutheromania', writing in 1895,³³ compared the Andrews of 10 years before with that to be currently observed:

'...he wore (then) a linen collar and had other characteristics that distinguished him from the rest of humanity... A linen collar is law to the great majority of men in this country - I suppose Andrews would just as soon have the hangman's rope around his neck... (but he had) an extremely disagreeable stutter - he has conquered that, almost. There still remains a certain impediment, which causes a momentary pause in his speech, the while his face twitches nervously. But the voice is rich and clear...'

In 'Dawn to Dusk' Ernle Lane had gone on:

'...Clothed in an overcoat to cover his sometimes shirtless body and tattered clothes, Andrews would proceed to the Domain. Tying a large pole with a small black flag attached to an over-head tree he would deliver a two or three hours' exposition of philosophic anarchy to the proverbial... two men and a dog... Andrews obviously spoke right over the heads of the crowd...'

From unsympathetic Peter Coleman, I take an unrefracted description that, if at all true, probably refers to 1889:

'...He (J.A.A.) was a poor speaker, but was a well-known figure around the parks and wharves, where he stood blurring out un-

JOHN ARTHUR ANDREWS is probably the most important of the group which came together in the Melbourne Anarchist Club. He certainly has the best chance of being judged as such by literary people, since he has left more material (a lot of it unpublished or published under pseudonyms) than any of the others. His was a wide-ranging imagination and he had by far the strongest intellect. He was a gifted theoretician, poet, inventor and historian.

Writing in 1894 he said about himself:

'I was born at Bendigo, Victoria on October 27, 1865... while I could read words of two syllables, I was nearly ten before I went out for even a few minutes unattended, and thus grew up without companions of my own age, taking instead of boyish games, books and my own meditations, which later were directed mainly in guessing as to the structure of the earth, and of adult society...'

He went on to describe his 'childish' interpretation of society, shopkeepers as salaried servants of people who vote in village assemblies to decide public works and facilities, with the Queen the only legislator, everyone working the land to subsist:

'From that conception I was awakened one day, when about eleven years of age to a knowledge of the horrible reality by observing a shopkeeper vary a price. A mass of trifling recollections now crowding to mind forced home the fatal significance; and in that moment I felt as if the world had vanished from under my feet. Before everything seemed rational, secure, subsistence assured, enjoyments calculable; each for himself, but also for and with all. Now, everything was unsettled, a chaos of discordant and irrelevant speculation; subsistence and comfort a gambler's chance, every man for himself without and against every other. I came home pale and agitated, the shock of the disillusioning had been too much for me, and it was some days before I ceased to be conscious of its unnerving effects...'

All of this, of course had enormous consequences on his views of and experience in adult life. His personal tribulations were by no means over, but already one can see the two strands which were to prove decisive - the tendency to physical weakness and the capacity for brilliantly expressed introspection.

'Rivuleth', whom Merrifield believes was B.P.O'Dowd, says that Andrews lived part of his childhood at Emerald Hill, South Melbourne (until 1874) then at Balwyn.

'...At 11 years of age he attended the Kew State School... (where) the other boys ill-treated him; sensitive to taunts he was chased, beaten, hunted down daily for two years... After this he attended State College where he did not work hard but (was) successful at examinations and passed the matriculation in December, 1881...'

In early 1882, his father died of phthisis, or TB :

'...My father (had become) chief clerk in the Victorian Mines and Water Supply Department where his observation of officialdom led him to vow that (no son?) of his should be placed in the (government service?). It was his intention (to bring us?) all up to handicrafts as... affirmation of his belief in the dignity

of labour. Both these purposes were frustrated in so far as they concerned me by his untimely death.¹²

So, at 17, Andrews joined the same department as a clerk on a salary of £120 pa. In 1883 he joined the Young Men's Literary Society and 'by ability became leader'. In 1884 he had 'his first public literary triumph'. 'Rivulet' provides no details, but in 1885 he won a 'Melbourne Herald' competition with a poem on the Eight-Hour Day.

He later wrote about this period:

'...15 or 16 years ago (I) was so much more ambitious. I was going to publish a paper, was writing novels, and was at the same time working up several entertainments and trying to organise a dramatic club!¹³

This same item records his waiting for Price Warung (William Astley), but meeting detectives instead and with them exploring the grimmer parts of Melbourne which were later to be his home.¹⁴ Fleetingly he involved himself with secularism and State Socialism. He says he only wrote once to the Liberator, the Melbourne free-thought paper. This was a letter on W.W. Collins, free-thought lecturer.

Though unhappy with the Public Service he persisted until the end of 1886 when he was dismissed for refusing to apologise to a senior officer, with whom apparently there had been something of a running battle. Andrews wrote:

'...I was dismissed from the Civil Service on 23 December 1886 in a manner utterly at variance with the intentions of the law and with every principle of judiciary justice...'¹⁴

Although now plunged again into nervous and physical ill-health to the point of considering suicide, he persisted in public activities, and with his writing. He said¹⁵ that he joined the Melbourne Anarchist Club (MAC) in 1886, but his first recorded appearance is 2 January 1887. Not convinced about anarchism to start with,¹⁶ on 9 January 1887 he spoke to the Club on 'Government Jobbery', doubtless venting some of his spleen on his former employers. On 20 February he spoke on 'The Exhibition Fraud', suggesting that such Trade Fairs as was being held in Melbourne at the time were not in the interests of 'free trade' and helped large firms at the expense of small ones. He apparently took over as Secretary of the Co-operative Printing Co, which printed 'Honesty' for the MAC for a few weeks around May 1887. Then he went to Dunolly (rural Victoria) for a period of employment with a solicitor (May 1887-mid 1888) during which his health improved.

On his return to Melbourne, he widened his public activities indicating that the severe stutter he was said to have had earlier, had at least, abated. He returned to the Anarchist Club to find the mutualists debating fiercely among themselves about the best methods to measure labour time and labour products to ensure equity and independence. His response to this division, which resulted in the first major split and the Club's relocation in a Co-operative Home was to sit down and work out his own position. This he articulated as communist anarchism, believing 'his' synthesis to be unique and the first worthy of the label. Introducing this philosophy, which attempted to remove the distinctions between 'communism' and 'individualism', into the Club discussions precipitated a second split

icant aspect of Australia's history. His close friend, Bernard O'Dowd, provided the information after Andrews' death, that besides Latin and Chinese Andrews knew all the European languages except Russian which, with Hebrew, he began to study 'late in life'. Andrews recalled in 1898:

'In Sydney, the anarchists themselves...were nearly all foreigners, German, English Chartists or from Victoria...Even now the anarchist movement remains in Sydney...for the most part French by birth or by extraction...In South Australia...there are now a large number of German anarchists.'¹⁶

This period of relative security (he lived at 4 Brighton Street, Richmond) could not ward off the effects of previous privations and, on 26 July 1903, Andrews succumbed to TB in Melbourne Hospital (admitted late 1902). 'Friends' kept him from a pauper's grave and had him buried in an unmarked grave in the Church of England section of the Boorondara (Kew) Cemetery. Fleming wrote later that at the end Andrews' mind wandered, he called in a priest and died a Roman Catholic.

It is perhaps accepted that he was a more than reasonable poet, (O'Dowd, a well-known poet himself, certainly thought so), but what is certainly not known is the range of his work. Poems such as 'Dave and the Squatter', the 'Anarchist Battle Song' and 'Teufelsweilt' vary enormously in tone and style, while part of his prodigious prose output was science fiction, and there is an untitled novel in his papers in the Mitchell Library.

In the 'Bulletin' of 31 March 1900 Andrews listed some of his achievements as an inventor. These included: an automatic adjustor for venetian blinds, a luminous photographic process, a 'poetical' machine and a 'penny dreadnauts' machine for aspiring writers, devices for stopping gas lights from jumping, for carrying ink without a bottle, for producing water from fire and for setting up type quickly. In his jail letters of 1895 he described two cheap processes for printing handbills, etc.

It is possible that Andrews died a virgin. He never married. No individual women appeared to concern him. It was suggested that he was a homosexual¹⁷ comparing him to Oscar Wilde, but his own temperament and the strictures of his time were probably sufficient to prevent any such developments. He did hold and argue for liberal views about sex and marriage, views which he saw as logical parts of his anarchism.¹⁸ These views were perhaps shaped more by his reading of scientific journals than by personal experience.

He was, in addition to his other activities, associated with the Criminological Society, probably through lawyer Marshall Lyle, and with 'The Maximum Rent League' formed towards the end of 1901 for which he, with Fryer and Souter, was a delegate to Preston Labour League.¹⁹ In the 'Tocsin' of 16 January 1902 in an item on 'Prisoners and Prison Treatment' he referred to the case of Maggie Hefferan, in jail and very ill, then released, and he asked the public to support the call by the Criminological Society for a Royal Commission into the prison system. This was a long standing interest. In the first issue of 'Reason' he described his 1894 trial for sedition, and in the second analysed the ethics of prison behaviour and disci-

Coming out of jail around July 1895 he spent some time in Sydney before returning to Melbourne, 'The Socialist' of 10 September saying he intended to produce a paper.

No paper eventuated but leaflets 'Each According to His Needs' and 'Criticisms on Authority, Law and the State' bearing the address 191 Cardigan Street, Carlton (Victoria), appeared, as did 'Invicta Spes' a poem which Bernard O'Dowd regards as a masterpiece. For the Buenos Aires Communist Anarchist journal 'El Perseguido' he produced an article published September 1895 and he corresponded with someone in Adelaide about trying to form an anarchist group there.

By January 1896 he was at 2 Oxford Street, South Yarra, from which the two issues of the substantial magazine 'Reason' appeared, with the help of 'Rivuleth'. 'Teufelsweldt' (Devils World), an epic poem, appeared the same year. He continued his international correspondence with Paris and the Oregon 'Firebrand' with which last he was offered a job, but could not raise the fare, while attempting to revive the MAC with Fleming and White. He also, possibly produced items ascribed to the Sydney Anarchist Movement in 1896 (e.g. 'Anarchy', a newsletter and pamphlets) but the 'Daily Telegraph' of 13 January 1897 certainly reports him addressing a meeting of seven at Harrington Street (near Circular Quay) and trying to start a Sydney society. Otherwise he remained in Victoria.

From 1895, Andrews gradually tired of mass agitational work for anarchism and concentrated on more philosophic and behind-the-scenes work. He wrote continually for papers and became well-known to numerous politicians through his quiet contributions to ongoing discussions about policy. He didn't lose his interest in rural self-sufficiency, however. The 'Austral Philosophic Savages - Murray River Tribe',²² paying allegiance to Thoreau, Chang-Tzu, Tolstol and Jesus Christ, involved Andrews but there are no details of how the project fared. As the 'Daily Telegraph' item shows he didn't entirely give up organisational work either. The 7th April 1898 issue of 'Tocsin' advertised a meeting of Voluntary Socialists or Communist-Anarchists for the Yarra Bank for the following Sunday at 3.00 p.m., but again no other details. Andrews was involved, as was Frank Anstey, later MP, with the Victorian Labor Federation²³ which was formed in 1898 to foster working class self-help. Andrews was Secretary from July 1900 to mid 1901 when he took over from O'Dowd as editor of 'Tocsin', retaining a position of Trustee for the VLF when it was re-organised into the Co-operative Commonwealth.

In 1901 President McKinley of the USA was assassinated by Czogolsz, labelled 'anarchist' by political opportunists. In a local response, as editor of 'Tocsin', Andrews listed the 'cardinal tenets' of anarchism to show their sanity and peaceful nature. He distanced himself to some degree from 'the anarchists' by claiming that their rejection of all 'legislation, politics, the State, etc' was based on too narrow a use of words.²⁴ Also in 1901, he introduced a 'prominent foreign exponent' of anarchism to newspaper readers by organising an interview with the 'Evening News'.²⁵ This continued his international activities and underlined his long-standing role as bridge from English-speakers to non-English speaking anarchists, a hidden but significant

and the ultimate demise of the organisation. Two points were at issue: whether a labourer retained the right to the product created or whether it became common property, and secondly, whether fighting and physical violence was an inevitable consequence of a change-over from an exploitative and hierarchical society to a co-operative one. The mutualists and David Andrade supporters believed the communists, in discussing the very real possibility of violence were indicating a hope for it to happen, that they in fact were justifying the anti-anarchist hysteria and manipulative assertions that 'anarchism' meant perpetual massacre.²⁶

While this debate was working itself out, Andrews succeeded Upham, who returned to secularism during the first Club upheaval, as publisher for the last two issues of 'Honesty'. A collection of his poems 'Temple Mystic' issued towards the end of 1888 carried the Imprint of F.W.Niven in Ballarat, though a mention in 'Honesty' implies it was printed by the Club. Two of his pamphlets, 'Nihilism' and 'For Truth and Right', were in type at the time of the Club's fragmentation but were not published till some years later. He continued his contributions to journals such as 'Punch', 'Bulletin' and 'The (Melbourne) Herald', often under pseudonyms, and he edited the journal of the Australian Natives Association, the 'Australian', till it ceased at the end of 1888. One has to entertain the suspicion that anti-anarchist items in these publications before 1888 were written by Andrews.

After relations between the 'communists' and the 'mutualists' turned bad the communists left the Club to the others in early 1889.

Andrews later said he then struggled:

'...through about the hardest time of (my) life...often living for a week on two loaves of bread and often going without food altogether, even for four days, but this was largely due to my having, then most particularly, less than the average individual's share of necessary cheek and self-assertiveness'.²⁷

To save money, he slept in parks, in water-tanks, in doss-houses, or walked the streets without sleeping. He foraged for wild food on the river bank, strengthening his theories of self-sufficiency and belief in himself. His total income was usually derived from the sale of the 'Radical' which, along with his soap-boxing, earned him constant police harassment. He did try living in houses, at 38 North Street and 18 Ophir Street, North Richmond, but rents were prohibitively for even the humblest dwellings. He saw women as more politically aware than men:

'...They recognise that the workers are slaves and that the middle-class and especially those who monopolise the land are their irreconcilable enemies. There is however, a lack of thoroughgoing revolutionists to show them the way to effect their emancipation...'

By revolution he meant:

'...the refusal to pay rent, the resistance to eviction, the persistent entry upon lands, upon factories, machines, magazines, the reiterated practice of working and keeping the whole produce, of leaving employment and not leaving work or the workshop...
...The methods of force will depend upon the circumstances of

each case and the judgement of the individual revolver. In some cases the force will take the form of resistance to eviction or to distress, or to attempted imprisonment. It may take the form of carrying away articles which it is attempted to seize. In other cases it will be the taking possession of and working ships, railways, etc, as may become necessary or desirable; the forcible throwing open of public museums and libraries when arbitrarily closed by the authorities; the seizure of goods in warehouses, freight or load and distribution far and wide; the sudden demolition of buildings used for adverse purposes and their re-erection in fitting localities as dwellings and workshops for those who now live in hovels, or their bodily transportation, entire, for such purposes, to suitable positions or their transformation as they stand, into places of public utility and convenience.

The day when a Government depot of ammunition can be safely and suddenly made to vanish into the hands of those who will use it only in self-defence or for industrial purposes, the prestige of the State will have received a shock from which it will find it hard to recover. The day when a train load of wheat consigned to a speculator can vanish directly into the kitchens of the consumers, and a factory full of furniture and clothing and manufactured produce be sent whirling at express speed to the farmers in the country, before speculator, capitalist or State can take the alarm, the efficacy of any armed force to cope with the revolution will have received a practical denial and the very roots of the present system will be shaken dry. It will be impossible to maintain or to live by the old order, and little by little practice which contains the most direct and therefore the most effective application of force, which is the necessary element of all labour, will become habitual with the people...."

The communist-anarchists and other Melbourne socialists formed a branch of the Australian Socialist League (ASL)² in March 1889 and Andrews was secretary until Rosa, then not long in Australia, Flynn and others changed the constitution in July to turn it into a Social-Democratic League. The communist-anarchists then moved to form their own organisation but this does not appear to have happened, Andrews claiming that by this time the creed had too many supporters to be manageably encompassed by one organisation. A Knights of Labor Assembly was established, involving avowed anarchists, Larry Petrie, Peter McNaught and 'Chummy' Fleming, but Andrews bitterly disparaged it.

Much of his writing in 1889 appeared in Winspear's 'Radical' published at Hamilton, NSW. This arrangement contributed to Winspear's acceptance of and commitment to anarchism and made possible the channelling of much anarchist material to the budding labour movement in eastern Australia and Adelaide. However, Winspear was inclined to a mutualist form and eventually alienated the Sydney Socialist League (ASL) executive who deserted the paper causing its final disappearance.

In addition, Andrews contributed to two Portuguese anarchist journals and to Tucker's 'Liberty' in Boston.

irrelevant and the stigmatisation process no longer required.

There is much more to these episodes of course. In particular, the stories of Andrews' jailings are classics of farcical trials and manipulated courtrooms.

In July 1894, he and his fellow publishers Wolfe and Robinson were jailed for not having a printer's imprint in the 'correct' place on his 'Handbook of Anarchy' which should be considered his definitive statement. Andrews did have his name and address on it. The reaction of the judge and his steam-rolling of Andrews into jail was based on the abusive view of Anarchism propagated by Anarchism's enemies which is so prevalent still. Yet the 'Handbook' begins:

'Anarchy is freedom. The literal meaning of the word 'free' is to love or like; thus when we say that a man is free we imply that he is 'to like', that is, he has only to like in order to decide what he will do, or try to do. Among the things which people in general like, is to avoid hurting others....'

On gaining his 'freedom' Andrews worked on publications. One of which, 'Revolt', contains material which some authorities considered seditious. He was arrested in December and jailed on 21 February 1895 for 5 months after spending 2 months in jail waiting for trial.

During 1894 he found time, probably in jail, to learn some Chinese and to write 'pot-boiler' novelles for Sydney publishers. Before his first arrest and between his two periods in jail, Andrews did what he could to support the affairs and families of the Active Service Brigade members jailed over the 'Hard Cash' and 'Justice' articles. He drew both good and bad conclusions. In the 'Revolt' of December 1894 he wrote:

'...Progress: If there is any progress to note, hereabouts, the anarchists have not their own efforts to thank for it. So many avowed adherents of the true sociology as there are here ought to be able to manage an active work of propaganda instead of leaving that to the unsupported energies of a few worse hampered than they by poverty and in some cases by difference of language as well. Not to mince matters at all, the great mass of anarchists here seem to lack...the traditional zeal of new converts and the steady quiet energy of...partisans. They do not seem to take the slightest interest in their own opinions. Yet progress there has certainly been - for Anarchy is not like false creeds which can only grow by being 'taught'. It is scientific knowledge capable of being revived and spread by independent observation. The lesson of New Australia has powerfully influenced various of the adherents towards anarchy. A very manifest anarchist tendency of thought is arising among the progressive unionists whose socialism is now about the standard of the old anarchic social democratic alliance at the time of Bakunin. In fact the phenomena of the international are reproducing themselves only more quietly, in our labour movement. The open air meetings have now been pushed into Balmain with fair prospects, and would be extended to other suburbs, but human powers are limited. Wanted, comrades to take part in in-or-outdoors propaganda in their localities. I will do all I can to give them a start!'

partial information about the manifesto and who confessed his part.

A few months later, a former friend of Andrews warned him of an impending threat to frame him in some bomb-plot or violent 'event'. This same person then attacked Andrews in a Sunday paper, accusing him of making bombs and claiming he had immense influence on the labour movement which was taking up policies of murder and mayhem. There were also implied references to Petrie. Another, more sympathetic journalist, also warned Andrews that he was being set up for arrest on some capital charge.

Then, as though to tighten the pressure, the Government banned public meetings at the usual place and arrested locked-out pickets at a bootmakers simply for being pickets. The same 'zealous reformer' tried to stir up a labour reaction, in particular a protest meeting at the banned location. He particularly wanted Andrews to attend along with Trades Hall people. Andrews, alarmed and suspicious, tried to talk these out of being involved and to cancel the meeting. They were not convinced but the meeting was called off anyway. Then, a new gathering, same place, same time was somehow organised and although poorly attended Andrews noticed what he considered to be troop and security arrangements which could only have been okayed at a high level. He distributed warnings to reformers to stay clear and to be on their guard.

Approaching May, 1893, two detectives, both French, posed as anarchist comrades with bomb plans and attempted to get samples of Andrew's typefaces and/or his handwriting on an explosive formula. He kept them at bay. A new clandestine magazine, 'Hard Cash', began circulation exposing bank malpractices and the tie-ups between self-interested members of the 'elite'. A number of banks fail, tensions go to an even higher level and the police increase surveillance and other efforts. A planted bomb intended to incriminate Andrews is found and disposed off before the police can re-discover it. The Aramac explosion occurs off Brisbane heads and since Petrie is on board without a clear alibi he is arrested although there is evidence of a setup.

Andrews begins to think that perhaps the radicals would be better off taking the offensive. Others of his circle think likewise and prepare for war. The deadline for action becomes the decision in a Sydney-trial related to Petrie's case in Brisbane. But the first case is dismissed and the case against Petrie shown to be based on police perjury. He is released.

An armed force devotee suggests a spectacular 'event' to bring on the longed-for clash, but Andrews talks him out of it.

In 1894, Andrews is eventually jailed, twice in fact, and spends most of twelve months in jail on minor but nevertheless trumped up charges. The tension has now disappeared, as the entrenched authorities have won. The union movement has been reduced to tatters, the radicals are dispersed or in jail and the 'movement' has been turned aside into the moderate, respectable path of social democracy. Simultaneously, the anarchists are considered

Early in 1890, he, like many others, took to the roads north of Melbourne, and found work on the 'Yea and Alexandra Standard' from where he wrote to the 'Age' of 10 May, as International Anarchist Correspondent on the situation in Europe, when the crucial struggle known as the Maritime Strike began in August, 1890, and he found himself with information that troops from rural Victoria were on their way to Melbourne to maintain a state of emergency for the employers, he issued a Manifesto, for distributing which in 1892 John White was jailed.¹³ Andrews also played an important part in the Strike itself by making public confirmation of Colonel Tom Price's 'Lay 'em Out' order to his troops after a denial had been issued by the Victorian Government. Andrews left the paper and returned briefly to Melbourne where he called a meeting of communist-anarchists and thought about starting 'an opposition paper'. Neither initiative produced tangible results. Perhaps he also expected to be called to appear before the enquiry into the Price incident. He was not called, being described as 'a rank anarchist' by one who was. Neither was he asked to comment upon the replacement of the Government by the Governor when a no-confidence motion, resulting from MP's nervousness towards the enquiry's effects on Labor voters, was carried. He would have understood how this legalistic sleight-of-hand represented more of the same, despite some pleasure at his part in the exposure of the previous Cabinet.

Around the end of 1890 he tramped overland to Sydney, probably leaving a trail of anarchist symbols and graffiti.¹⁴ He soon appeared at the Sydney ASL rooms and met up with German-born anarchist Joseph Schellenberg at whose farm he then lived. Schellenberg had been an early member of the ASL.

By mid-1891 Andrews had helped establish some sort of 'operations centre' at the Smithfield (just out Sydney) Schellenberg farm. From this base the members of the Communist-Anarchist Group of Central Cumberland¹⁵ influenced the agitational scene in Sydney, and throughout Australia.

Simple chronological ordering of Andrews' movements, publications and participation in struggle does not adequately represent his importance, as it might in the case of significant but locally-oriented anarchists like 'Chummy' Fleming or David Andrade. Andrews was a theoretician, not a street activist, in the main, though he did that as well, and he must be evaluated against the background of the larger industrial debate. Difficult to follow at times and guided by principle in a way that few others could match, he was both the articulator of the decentralised socialist option then available to the labour/radical movement in a way we today can only sense, and the target for the forces that destroyed that option.

Because he was outspoken in his anarchism at a time when mere mention of the word was like a red rag at a bull for many people, and because his disdain for dress and lifestyle conventions was so obvious, he influenced people towards local control and decentralised structures at the very time those people chose to distance themselves from him. Police frame-ups, newspaper campaigns of vilification and arbitrary judgements of courts, all fuelled in their hysteria and ignorance by fear of the social upheaval hanging over them, harassed

him and eventually killed him by breaking him physically, his weakest point.

Central to the events, which can't be detailed here, was the question of violence. Andrews consistently counselled reason and moderation but was just as consistently misquoted and misunderstood. His view of revolution was that it should be the result of spontaneous uprisings and he tended to disregard conspiratorial planning for educational efforts. He strongly supported direct action and agonised, again as many other radicals did, over the apparent cowardice and submissiveness displayed by 'the cream of Australian manhood' and its union leaders. He asked why it was that in the face of attempts by labour leaders to show that strikes did not succeed, cables from Europe continually reported instances in which they did.

The Sydney ASL was the battleground where the first major defeat for the direct-action/non-parliamentary activists was achieved by the moderates and opportunists posing as 'labor' politicians and rushing the chance to get paid parliamentary billets. Rosa, erstwhile revolutionist in other situations, joined forces with the centralisers to stop the ASL engaging in campaigns around unemployment, prohibited anyone with a criminal record from speaking from an ASL platform, demanded that all 'self-professed' anarchists withdraw from the League, and barred 'revolutionary' language.¹⁶ This series of measures in July 1891, had the desired effect of driving pro-anarchist expressions further underground and anarchist supporters into more widely-flung locations, ironically some well-known 'mainstream' propagandists like William Lane stood their ground, and, while not claiming to be anarchist, wrote that anarchism was the epitome of the bush ethos, 'going mates' or 'voluntary co-operation', and 'the highest possible social ideal'.

The ex-editor of a North Queensland paper, the Master-Workman of a southern Knights of Labor Assembly, one of the most popular of Australian Lecturers and other prominent persons in and out of the Australian Labour movement are known to their friends as ... enthusiastic Anarchists.¹⁷

These people can all fairly accurately be identified. About a year later Lane provided some of the names:

'W.W. Head, the Wagga ASU Secretary, Jim Mooney, ASU Sydney agent during the Queensland strike, Harry S. Taylor, best known of South Australian single-taxers, Peter McNaught, the Knights of Labour Master Workman, and others are all ready to give their lives and energies to that voluntary communism which is the highest individualism'.¹⁸

Unfortunately the system of injustice these people were opposing was not prepared to give way to mere enthusiasm. Two years later the efforts of all of these were dispersed, swept away by an application of power far greater than any of the radicals could mobilise.

In Andrews' case, October 1891 was the beginning of the end, ushering in a new conservative Government and what Andrews called 'The Reign of Terror'. Initially, apart from the disarray of the 'labor' representatives in Parliament there was little sign of a coming catastrophe. In October, a Conference of anarchists was held in Smithfield, with an overseas delegate and goodwishes from northern-heml-

sphere figures.¹⁹ The first issue of 'Anarchy', printed with the rough type that was Andrews' own cut-out wooden fount and tobacco-tin press, appeared to commemorate the Haymarket travesty.

Subsequently, the Smithfield centre as a kind of drop-in-centre and haven for radicals, proved too unstable for serious anarchists. Andrews left there in early 1892, and for the next 2 years moved about selling books, composing and talking, especially to tramps and hobos with whom he felt the strongest affinity. It is not easy to map his movements but he may have gone as far as western NSW, Queensland and Newcastle.²⁰ His health was not good and recurrent depression was both a cause and a result of what he saw as his inherent aloofness.

It is doubtful how effective his hand-produced leaflets and manifestos were. Imported materials were probably more influential. However, Andrews and to a lesser extent Larry Petrie, Schellenberg and a few others were the focal points as masses of people attempted to find their way through the contextual and moral problems tangled together in the ideas of radical social change. This meant they were called on to make public statements and made it more likely they would be the target of reactionary plotting. What Andrews called the 'Dynamite period' began in mid-1892. It is a period when he thought civil war possible at any time and probable on at least four occasions. It is a period of secrecy and mainly defensive plotting on the part of the anarchists and for which Andrews' own histories, fictional and non-fictional have needed detailed analysis to unravel. Here I provide a summary from his series of articles in 'Tocsin', called 'On Active Service' which he wrote in 1900:²¹

The elevation of the Dibbs-Government to power in NSW was regarded by protectionist-oriented labor people as likely to produce laborist policies but it wasn't long before Dibbs' antipathy to unions and all things 'labor' showed that the situation was far worse than under all previous tory Cabinets. Two responses became current among the radicals in particular - 'self-defence by armed force groups' and strenuous detective work and counter strategies.

In July 1892 the Broken Hill Strike began. Police spies were sent immediately and armed troops were sent later to escort 'free' labourers to the mines. Strike leaders were arrested in September and jailed in October. In Sydney, a 'zealous reformer' told members of the Government there was a revolutionary plot being hatched, and then proceeded to try to catch some dupes in a bogus plot concerning a 'Provisional Government'. Having orchestrated the 'dupes' production of a MANIFESTO he tried to engineer a crowd-rush on Parliament House knowing that there were troops with machine guns in position behind the building. He hoped that any 'incident' would vindicate his information to the Dibbs Cabinet and earn him a reward. An MP, George Black, asked to join the Provisional Government was at the time told of the troops in hiding. Sizing up the situation he rushed outside to stall the unruly crowd, by filibustering and dissipating their energies. Andrews meanwhile had confronted one of the 'dupes', who can be identified as Larry Petrie, with